

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### Thanksgiving

#### Introduction

As best can be counted, the Lord performed approximately one hundred and fifty recorded miracles, the vast majority of which were performed for the restoration of physical health (Matt. 9:20-22), physical handicap (Jn. 9:25), or resurrecting an individual from the dead (Lk. 7:11-15). That which is particularly noticeable is how many of those individuals who received from Him that which no physician could do (Mk. 5:26), never returned to say "Thanks". Sadly we only read of one occasion when such happened (Lk. 17:12-18), and even after the woman at the well was given living water, there is no record of thanksgiving (Jn. 4:10-15, 29).

Sadly, giving thanks can be so rote, just a matter of formatted words, void of any genuine gratitude.

- a) Let me explain. I have zero interest in Royal Doulton Figurines, whereas my wife thinks they are beautiful. If someone gave me one, I would politely say, "Thank-you, that is beautiful" but it would only be from the teeth out. However, if my wife was given one she would be gushing about the dress, the colors, and how lovely it is, giving the person a hug and profusely saying thank you. The same words are being said but with an entirely different heart. I fear it is very easy to slip into being like me and the Royal Doulton Figurines when it comes to thanking God for His blessings.
- b) Another consideration is that of being surrounded with the blessings of God in the material world and not appreciating the greatness of the gifts which are of a spiritual nature. We can just take them for granted, and that I suggest is very hurtful to the Lord, much the same as how we would feel if we gave someone, which to us was a wonderful gift, and it meant little to them.

#### Thanksgiving In The Scriptures

A review of the scriptures would show that the word "thank" occurs thirty-two times; "thanks" occurs seventy-three times; thanksgiving occurs twenty-nine times; and "thanksgivings" occurs 2 times. It is rather astounding to discover that we never read of anyone giving thanks until David gives God thanks on the day he was delivered out of the hands of all his enemies and Saul (2 Sam. 22:1). Then we read, "Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee" (2 Sam. 22:50). However, someone may argue that perhaps the scriptures speaks of them giving praise and does not use the word "thanks". Looking at that we discover that the first time the word "praise" is used is when Leah conceived and bore Judah, and it is recorded, "Now will I praise the Lord" (Gen. 29:35).

One of the great blessings of life is to have those who have gone before and given us an example. In the New Testament there are two men who gave superb examples of those who gave thanks, the Lord and Paul. The Lord in His earthly sojourn gave thanks for:

- a) “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matt. 11:25)
- b) At the grave of Lazarus He said: “I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me” (Jn. 11:41)
- c) When the Lord was about to feed the five thousand He gave thanks (Matt. 15:36)
- d) At the institution of the Lord’s Supper the Lord gave thanks for the cup (Mk. 14:23) and the bread (Lk. 22:19).

Paul gave thanks for:

- a) The faith of the Romans which was spoken of throughout the world (Rom. 1:8)
- b) Upon every remembrance of the saints at Philippi (Phil. 1:3)
- c) The reception of the word of God by the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:13)

### What Have We To Give God Thanks For?

- 1) Having lived in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles, I thank God for the blessing of living in a peaceful country. Of course we in Canada have murders and gangs etc., but when I think of places like Syria etc., we are blessed to live in a country of peace.
- 2) I thank God for the liberty we have as christians. I know it is getting more restricted but in the grace and mercy of God we can still preach the gospel, give a gospel tract, and have meetings. Thousands do not have that blessing.
- 3) Among the many temporal blessings are a clean bed to sleep in at night; good food and a variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and breads to enjoy; clean water to drink; clothes suitable to our changing environment; and a dollar in our pockets. I say that is reasons aplenty for thanksgiving.
- 4) To these temporal blessings the apostles wrote of the richest and most precious reasons for thanksgiving to God, three of which are:
  - a) The proffered gift of salvation to the whosoever
  - b) The hope of eternal life
  - c) Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus
  - d) Given unto us exceeding great and precious promises
- 5) Thank God for:
  - a) The proffered gift of salvation to the whosoever (Heb. 5:9)
    - i) I have had the privilege of ministering in twenty-two countries of the world, and as I look further afield to our website on which there has been people from 180 countries across the world, I thank God that no matter who they are, where they are, or what they are, I can assure them that there is sufficient merit in the sacrifice of the Lord to cleanse them from their sins. There never has been, neither will there ever be, an individual who will stand before God and charge Him with bias or favorites, for the free gift is upon ALL men unto salvation. The old verse still stands sure: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but hath everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). John wrote: “And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD” (1 Jn. 2:2). NO one will ever be able to say, “God never provided salvation for me”, or “The work of Christ was insufficient to meet my need”, or “God would not give it to me”. The Lord has stated: “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn. 6:37). The gift of salvation is a genuine offer open to ALL.
  - b) The hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2)
    - i) When we use the word “Hope” it indicates an anticipation without assurance. That is not how it is used when speaking about that which God has given. The Holy Spirit gives us instruction about the “blessed Hope” of the Lord’s return (Titus 2:13) and the “hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). These are assurances for the word as used by God, and means a confident expectation, a joyous anticipation. The “hopes” which God announces are not mere pie in the sky dreams, but actual realities. We can now in this life be assured that Heaven is our eternal home, we will never be cast into the Lake of Fire, and be bereft of any hope of deliverance for all eternity.
  - c) Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3-6, 11)
    - i) Having spoken of our blessing through and in Christ, the apostle then remunerates the ones so precious to his heart at that moment of time.
      1. “He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”
      2. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself”
      3. “He hath made us accepted in the beloved”
      4. “We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins”
      5. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance”

- ii) If we have nothing other than the first clause, our hearts ought to rise in thanksgiving especially when we consider:
  1. Before Genesis 1:1 in its original construction, in what we call (due to the frailty of human language) eternity past, God in His foreknowledge chose each child of God. He knew how each would respond to the offered salvation and now assures us of His acceptance of our reception of Christ by telling us, He affirmed that decision by also choosing us in eternity past.
  2. The word “chosen” carries the thought of “choosing for oneself”. What a truth this is. Despite the hardness of Israel’s heart and we Gentiles having no claim on any blessing from God, He chose us for Himself, making us accepted not in the Lord or Christ but in the Beloved, accepted in all the depths of God’s affection toward His Son. Precious blessedness beyond words.
- d) Given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4)
  - i) Peter is drawing a contrast between the great and precious promises Israel had and the superiority of the ones available under the new covenant. Their promise was for an earthly inheritance. Under the new covenant it is a heavenly inheritance. Theirs was of a temporal non fully effective cleansing for sin for it provided atonement. The promise now is for cleansing from sin. The old economy only permitted the high priest once a year to enter the holiest, now each believer is encouraged to come boldly before the Throne of grace. Under the law there were multiple priests due to death, but now we have a priest who lives in perpetuity.

## Conclusion

When thinking on such blessings my heart takes the words of the Psalmist as its own: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Psa. 139:6). In looking at my own “thanksgiving” I see there is a need to ask the Spirit of God through Christ to deliver me from the deadness of dutiful without genuineness expressions of gratitude and open my eyes and mind to appreciate that our food, clothing, and spiritual blessings are all expressions of His mercy, grace and love, and in truth give Him thanks. Truly, if the truths of the manifold blessings of God gripped our spirits our hearts would raise in adoring worship and thanks to Him who has shown such mercy, love and grace to such unworthy creatures. The words of Arthur Sullivan come to mind, and with them let us bow and give God thanks.

Let us, with a gladsome mind,  
Praise the Lord, for He is kind.

*Refrain*  
*For His mercies aye endure,*  
*Ever faithful, ever sure.*

He with all commanding might  
Filled the new made world with light.

He hath, with a piteous eye,  
Looked upon our misery.

All things living He doth feed,  
His full hand supplies their need.

Let us, with a gladsome mind,  
Praise the Lord, for He is kind.

. . . . Rowan Jennings

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